Cowley College 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

FIER E

Focus | Impact | Equity | Relevance | Community | Equip

Contents

Support of the Mission

Cowley College's 2022-2025 strategic plan supports its mission, vision, and values through action that drives improvements for stakeholders.

Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement.

The Mission of Cowley College

Champion the relevance of two-year colleges in higher education through holistic learning and workforce development opportunities

The Vision of Cowley College

People, Accountability, Integrity, Leadership

The Values of Cowley College

Alignment with Accreditation

Cowley College uses strategic planning processes that demonstrate support of its mission, vision and values in compliance with its accreditor's, the Higher Learning Commission, Federal Criterion.

> **Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning**
>
> The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
>
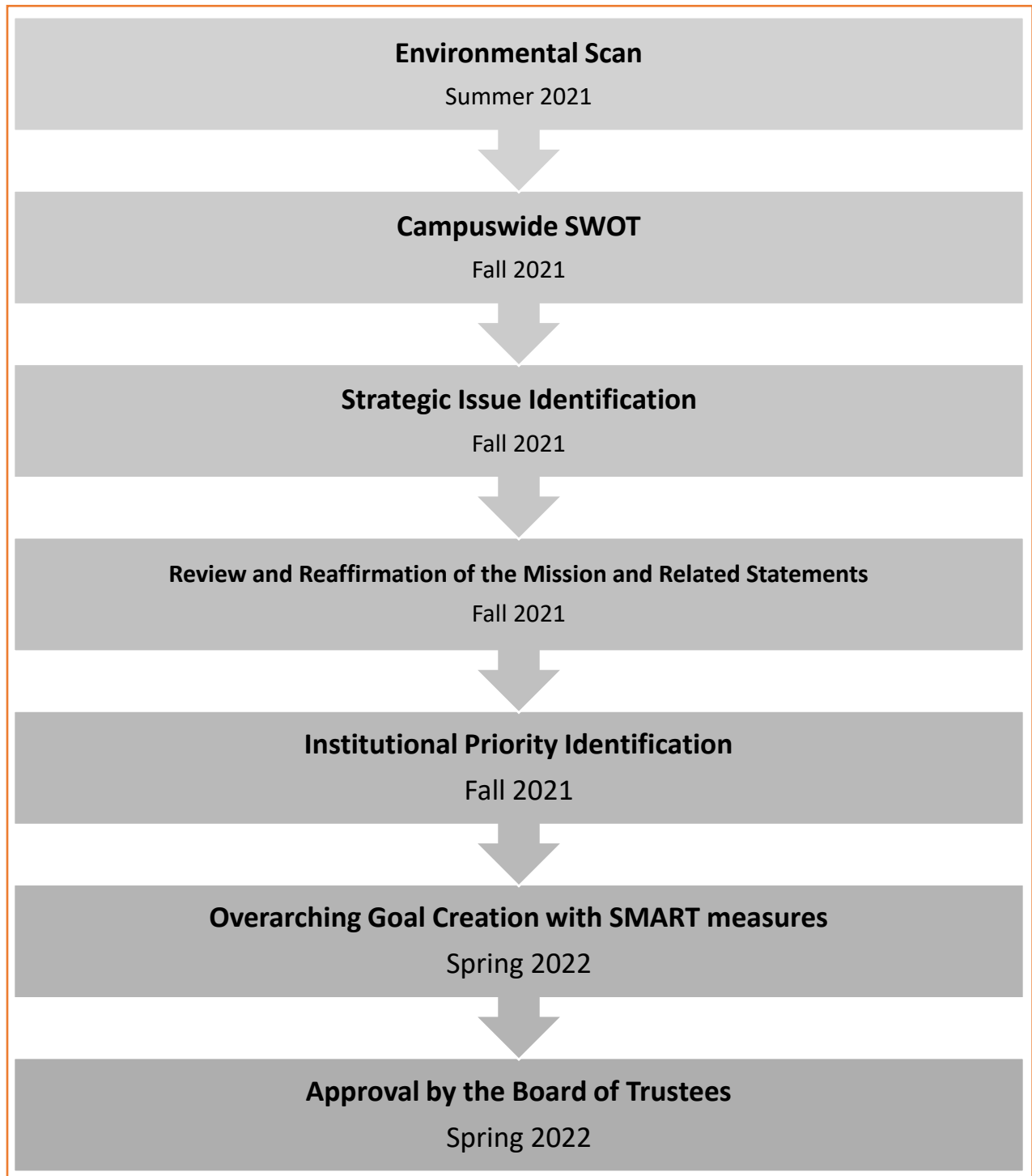> **Core Component**
>
> **5.C.** The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.
>
> 1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
> 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
> 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
> 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
> 5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
> 6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Reinforcing the Kansas Board of Regents Strategic Plan

The College's strategic plan supports the Kansas Board of Regents' IKBOR) strategic plan, [Building a Future](#), pillars Helping Kansas Families through goals focused on early momentum to graduation, an emphasis on equity, use of innovative technolgoy and increased partnership with the community.

Environmental Scan

Summer 2021

Campuswide SWOT

Fall 2021

Strategic Issue Identification

Fall 2021

Review and Reaffirmation of the Mission and Related Statements

Fall 2021

Institutional Priority Identification

Fall 2021

Overarching Goal Creation with SMART measures

Spring 2022

Approval by the Board of Trustees

Spring 2022

Environmental Scan

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness completed an environmental scan during the summer of 2021 with analysis of information from a variety of information sources to include a focus on the internal and external constituencies within both the student population and the community as a whole.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature to center the environmental scan included but was not limited to:

Ash, A. N., Hill, R., Risdon, S. N., Jun, A. (2020). Anti-racism in higher education. *Race and Pedagogy Journal*, 4 (3).

Nunez, A., and Elizondo, D. (2013). Closing the Latino/ a Transfer Gap: Creating pathways to the baccalaureate. *Perspectivas: Issues in Higher Education Policy and Practice*.

Conran, K. J., O'Neill, K., and Sears, B. (2021). COVID-19 and students in higher education. *Research that Matters*, UCLA School of Law Williams Institute.

Bornschlegl, M., and Cashman, D. (2019). Considering the role of the distance student experience in student satisfaction and retention. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 34 (2), 139-155.

Van Duser, K. E., Lucas, C., and Cohen, S. (2020). The influence of rising tuition on first-year students' enrollment and persistence intentions. *College Student Journal*, 54 (4), 421-430.

Trend Analysis

Analysis of trends over time included the data sources and data points below.

- Sources of Data: Internal
    - Jenzabar Student Information System
    - 2021 Community Survey
- Sources of Data: External
    - Kansas Department of Education
    - United States Census Bureau American Community Survey
- Data Points
    - Enrollment by all student groups with demographic information to include gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age;
    - Enrollment by high school students to include Kansas residency status;
    - Enrollment by special college student groups, first time college and new transfer students to include headcount and original location;
    - Changes within the in-district service area with comparison between the State of Kansas, Cowley County, and the city of Arkansas City to include:
        - Demographics: Gender, race and ethnicity, age
        - Economic Indicators: Median household income, living in poverty, households with a computer, households with internet subscription, high school graduate or higher and bachelor's degree or higher (age 25 years+), individuals under 65 years of age with a disability
    - KBOR service area high school headcounts, graduation rates, and percentage of students qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch

SWOT Analysis

Faculty, staff and administrators completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis during the 2021 fall in-service. (See Appendix A).

Participants acknowledged strengths that included the College's dedicated personnel; forward thinking to include a prior emergency preparedness plan for online learning that predated the COVID-19 pandemic; good performance criteria for evaluations; course alignment for student transfer to other Kansas four-year institutions; transparency and shared government; and strong and fair academic integrity processes.

Recognition of weaknesses included reduced KBOR service area and local community populations with increasing poverty; fear and apathy; lack of balance that keeps academics first; inconsistency in listening to feedback; restricted spaces for career and technical education (CTE) programs; transparency; facilities maintenance; lack of service longevity for trustees; and community involvement.

Opportunities highlights included affordability; opportunities to grow the workforce center; improvements to the retention unit; engagement with both the community and the student body; improve employee experience through better onboarding; growth of the international student population; continued development of certificate programs to help students secure employment quickly; and addressing accessibility issues at all campuses.

Identified threats to the College included an unknown future due to the pandemic; changes in technology; approval of Associate's degrees at Kansas Regent universities; enrollment decline; filling faculty and staff positions; increased competition; decreased funding support from the State of Kansas.

Review and Reaffirmation of the Mission and Related Statements

The Cowley College Board of Trustees voted to reaffirm the College's mission statement with no changes at the September 20, 2021 public meeting following the presentation below.

> ***Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement.***
>
> An organization's mission state should clarify its purpose and communicate why it is doing what it does and who it serves.
>
> Our accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, places a great emphasis on the mission statement – the process used to develop it, how we articulate it publicly and most importantly, how it is the foundation for everything we do – from the people we serve to the academic programs we develop to the monies we spend.
>
> As an open admission, publicly funded community college, our mission should differ from the four-year sector because we serve everyone – the high school students in our (KBOR) service area; nontraditional/adult learners; and community members. Because we offer multiple opportunities to multiple populations, our mission statement should not be too narrow, but rather it should state broadly what we do.
>
> The College's current mission states: Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement.
>
> It is my recommendation that the Board of Trustees reaffirm the College's mission for the following reasons:
>
> - It is not too narrow – by not specifically listing types of stakeholders, we are not limited in who we serve
> - It captures the essence of the open access spirit of a two-year institution when it states we are "committed to providing opportunities"
> - It expresses our recognition that we are here to meet the needs of both students and community in a holistic manner by stating that we provide not only learning excellence through academic programming but also opportunities for personal achievement through participation in co-curricular activities such as student organizations and athletics and give our community the opportunity to engage through outreach activities like the Golden Tigers and workforce support.

Strategic Issues Identification

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness organized the feedback from the SWOT analysis into strategic issues themes related to community; infrastructure; student success, diversity, equity, and inclusion; access to education; revenue streams; academic programming; the COVID-19 pandemic; enrollment; and, organizational strength. (See Appendix B)

Members of the campus community evaluated the SWOT analysis feedback using the guidelines below to identify and prioritize strategic issues as a foundation for strategic theme and institutional priorities identification.

> *A strategic issue:*
> - Should broadly impact the entire organization;
> - Require the collaborative effort of multiple departments/divisions;
> - Might require changes to organizational design and/or the creation of new actions to meet the issue;
> - May require resource investment such as time, technology, and budget-allocation; and
> - Have high consequences to the organization if not addressed such as major long—term disruptions to services provided to stakeholders and/or large cost/revenue setbacks.

Teams used a focused view that asked the following questions:

- Will addressing this issue demonstrate our actions are aligned with our mission, vision and values?
- Is it within our ability to address this issue or will it require effort by other, outside groups? (Any issues which require significant input from groups outside the College are not strategic issues).
- Will it require the effort of multiple departments to address this issue? If not, this issue may be operational and not strategic.
- Will it take several years to address this issue? If it will only take one year to address this issue, it's probably operational and not strategic.
- **Will we face high consequences in terms of student success, stakeholder satisfaction and/or our ability to continue as a community college?** If the stakes are high, then it's a strategic issue.

Focus Groups

The Institutional Effectiveness Office hosted two (2) focus group sessions with directors, department chairs and faculty during September 2021. A cross-representation of employees provided feedback on the strategic themes identified from analysis of the campus session on strategic issues.

- Academic Affairs: Director of IMPACT (TRiO), Director of Library Services, Director of Workforce Education, IMPACT Academic Coordinator (TRiO), and Registrar;
- Athletics: Director of Academics and Compliance
- Enrollment Management: Admissions Representative, Director of Marketing, and Director of Student Enrollment and Success

- Faculty: Natural Sciences/Math Department Chair, Humanities Department Chair, and faculty representing the following disciplines:
  - Social Science
  - Criminal Justice
  - Math
  - Childcare and Development
  - Chemistry
  - Religion, Philosophy and Anthropology
  - English and Communications,
- Finance and Administration: Director of Auxiliary Services
- Student Services: Director of Residential Housing, Director of Student Life, and Director of Upward Bound (TRiO)
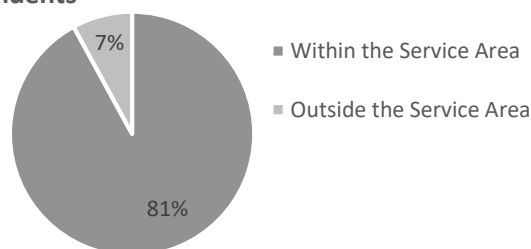
Community Stakeholder Survey

The College invited external stakeholder participation in the creation of the strategic plan through a publicly available, anonymous survey, published during the fall of 2021. An analysis of results was compiled by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for inclusion in the identification of institutional priorities.

352 stakeholders completed the survey, identifying the following stakeholder groups as best describing their relationship with Cowley College: advisory committee member, alumni, business partner, community member, donor, current student, employee, future student, high school partner, parent of a high school student, parent of a college student, service organization member, and/or trustees.

64.3% or 225 of the respondents identified themselves as attending Cowley College.

Location of Respondents

57% of the respondents identifying Arkansas City as the area that best described their involvement with Cowley College.

- Within the Service Area
- Outside the Service Area

7%
81%

Analysis of Results

The Community Stakeholder survey utilized a scoring scale of 1 to 5 for seventeen (17) items, listed below in ranked order from highest mean score to lowest.

	N	Mean Score
Cowley College makes a positive impact on the community it serves.	336	4.3
Cowley College personnel are courteous and helpful.	334	4.3
Cowley College expects ethical behavior of students and employees.	332	4.3
Cowley College offers adequate financial assistance and scholarships.	330	4.3
Cowley College presents an engaging community presence	339	4.2
Cowley College offers affordable tuition.	328	4.2
Cowley College facilities are well maintained and conducive to learning.	328	4.2
Students receive a high-quality education at Cowley College.	327	4.2
Cowley College employees are active in the community.	335	4.1
Cowley College offers a selection of programs that meets our community's needs.	331	4.1
Cowley College facilities are generally accessible to persons with physical disabilities.	328	4.1
Cowley College makes student learning a top priority.	327	4.1
Cowley College has adequate information technology infrastructure.	326	4.1
Cowley College adequately serves the work force needs in our community.	340	3.9
Cowley College partners well with area industries and businesses.	337	3.9
Cowley College offers an exciting campus life experience.	329	3.8
Cowley College's Board of Trustees represents the diverse interests of the community.	336	3.5

Justification for Proposed Institutional Priorities

The Institutional Effectiveness Office recommended the adoption of six institutional priorities in November 2021   These priorities resulted from the analysis of the information provided by internal and external stakeholders in combination with an adaptation of Osborne and Plastrik's Typology of Public-Sector Strategies[1].

Type of Strategy	Mission	Action	Stakeholders	Culture
Source of Leverage	Clarifying purpose	Focusing on strengths and opportunities to act on weaknesses and threats	Making public organizations accountable to their key stakeholders	Developing an entrepreneurial and service-oriented culture
Approaches	Use strategic management to create clarity of direction	Draw on strengths to eliminate weaknesses	Identify stakeholder wants and needs	Change habits by introducing new experiences
	Eliminate and/or redefine functions that no longer serve core purposes	Leverage relationships to create new opportunities	Offer stakeholders choice	Improve relationships among employees through collaborative work
	Clarify roles	Use competitive benchmarks	Emphasize service quality	Change employees' mental models

The College's strategic plan uses Osborne and Plastrik's Control Strategy through a shifting of power away from the top and center to give directors the power to lead, employees the power to improve results, and the organization the power to solve problems collaboratively.

Priority One: Focus

Faculty highlighted their concerns that the College's focus has shifted away from its core mission: student success; one instructor stating the institution need to "stop using student success as a catch phrase and return to making it a priority." A supporting theme also expressed by faculty, staff and administrators was a desire for the College to be able to demonstrate that resource allocation processes prioritized the support of academic programming, student learning, retention, and success.

Indicators from the annual KBOR Performance Agreement evidences the College's responsibility to continue to improve as a student ready campus. While efforts should be made to maintain the momentum seen for college-ready student retention, the average grade point average (GPA) for all first-year enrollments by students who placed in developmental coursework has continued to remain static and without significant improvement.

- +5.5%: Indicator 1 Increase first to second year retention rates of college-ready cohort
- +5.0%: Indicator 4 Increase the percentage of college-ready students that complete a certificate or degree, or transfer within three years of first, full-time enrollment

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[1] Osborne, D., & Plastrik, P. (1997). Banishing bureaucracy: The five strategies for reinventing government. Reading, MA: Addison: Wesley.
Osborne, D., & Plastrik, P. (2000). The reinventor's fieldbook: Tools for transforming your government. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Indicator 6 Increase overall first-year academic achievement (GPA) for students in developmental courses: 2.201 (baseline of 2.214)

Participants in the recent community stakeholder survey gave a 4.10 mean score for item, *Cowley College makes student learning a top priority* and a 4.22 mean score for item, *Students receive a high quality education at Cowley* College. A closer look at the responses includes the following sub-group mean scores:

	Cowley College makes student learning a top priority	*Students receive a high-quality education*
Current Student	4.21	4.21
Employees	3.97	4.31
Future Student	3.89	4.10
High School Partner	3.92	4.04
Parent, High School Student	3.88	4.28
Parent, College-aged student	3.81	4.19

This continued focus on student success continues a long-held strategic planning emphasis at Cowley College and will continue the goals housed under the 2018-2021 strategic plan's Institutional Priority 1, Student Success: Cowley College is focused on the design, deployment, and effectiveness of teaching-learning processes and the focus on retention rates for students in developmental courses (Institutional Priority 2, Goal 2.2).

Other identified needs for meeting future challenges included:
- Meeting the needs of students who are not college-ready
- Increasing student accountability
- Increasing student engagement with currently available campus resources that support success including but not limited to membership in IMPACT, attendance at The Writing Center and participation in tutoring services
- Minimizing the academic gap resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continued supports for academic quality with a continued focus on academic integrity
- Creation of new academic programs to equip students for emerging career fields
- Recognizing that student success includes academic, transfer out and social/personal growth
- Creation of new support services and adaptation of current to meet new student success issues including mindset and wellbeing

Priority Two: Impact

Stakeholders identified strategic issues that impact capability to provide access to education and services and capacity to meet organizational sustainability needs; these limitations challenge Cowley College's commitment to its Core Values. But a question that seemed to capture the view of one focus group was, "Why do we recruit students other than to pay the bills?" and the statement, "the importance of education is to improve lives." And as the College looks to a future with lower levels of state funding due to statewide reallocation of support to its community colleges, capability and sustainability will be critical ends to achieve through planning.

To remain relevant while operating in a sustainable manner, employees recognized the following constraints that hinder the College's scope and will continue the focus on resource alignment, sustainability and service development goals from Institutional Priority 5 Resource Stewardship, *Cowley College is focused on how the resource base of an institution supports and improves its educational programs and operations.*

The 2021 Environmental Scan revealed that 87.6% of households in Cowley County are equipped with a computer; -2.4% when compared with Kansas and -2.7% when compared with households across the nation (U.S. Census Bureau). These deficits stress the ability of local households to enroll in online coursework that may better fit their lives.

Community stakeholder survey respondents gave a mean score of 4.19 to survey item, *Cowley College offers affordable* tuition; 4.26 to survey item, *Cowley College offers adequate financial assistance and scholarships*; and 4.16 to survey item, *Cowley College facilities are well maintained and conducive to learning.*

	Cowley College offers affordable tuition	Cowley College offers adequate financial assistance and scholarships.	Cowley College facilities are well maintained and conducive to learning.
Current Student	4.15	4.34	4.28
Future Student	3.90	3.90	4.22
High School Partner	4.27	4.05	4.06
Parent, High School Student	4.21	4.14	3.78
Parent, College-aged student	3.94	4.10	3.92

Student feedback from the most recent administration of the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) supports multiple constraints identified by focus group participants; this information is included in the list below.

- Constraints impacting students
  - Access to internet and technology
  - Access to transportation
  - Access to physical facilities, both learning spaces and housing
  - Access to and engagement with support services
    - (SSI) Challenge indicator for Item 1, *The campus staff are caring and helpful*
  - Availability of course offerings in different modalities, at multiple locations and at varying times
  - Affordability; cost of a college degree
    - (SSI) Higher importance rating for Item 15, *Financial aid counseling is available if I need it*
- Constraints impacting students, *continued*
    - (SSI) Challenge indicator for Item 23, *This institution helps me identify resources to finance my education*
- Challenges for the institution
  - Need to "inspire a desire for education"
  - Declining enrollments
  - Better use of facilities
  - Leverage existing resources including buildings, people and money
  - Need to create methods to achieve and maintain financial stability despite shifting resources, i.e. new funding streams
  - Need for innovative enrollment strategies
  - Develop stronger communication strategies with all stakeholders
  - Create new methods for relationship-building with alumni

Cowley College collaborated with the National Institute for Student Success (NISS) at Georgia State University as part of a statewide initiative supporting the new, KBOR strategic plan, *Building a Future.* The final playbook from NISS recommends the following priority actions:

- Identifying which students are stopping-out, when this is most likely to occur, and why
- Standardize academic advising to ensure students across campus receive consistent, proactive support
- Focusing on the college student first year, the First Year Experience course, and academic advising processes.

Priority Three: Equity

Faculty and staff stressed their commitment to devote resources to support the needs of a variety of student groups. Effort made by both the College and its student body will continue past work to support diversity and inclusion found in Goal 2.1a., *Develop and implement a cultural diversity and inclusion plan for students and local stakeholders* (2018-2021 Cowley College Strategic Plan).

Data from the College's most recent IPEDS Completions Survey also supports the feedback received from focus group participants. This data, found in the Appendix, shows that following significant gains from the 2020 collection to the 2019, the number of male students from underrepresented student groups declined 8.3% when comparing the 2021 collection to the 2020, while white male student completions increased 7.3%. A deeper dive into the data shows that workforce certificate completion rates for underrepresented students had double-digit declines for two, consecutive academic years.

Cowley College's continued focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion supports goals held by its two primary external accountability partners, its accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and KBOR. HLC's new strategic plan, *EVOLVE 2025* and its accompanying *Equity Report 2021*, include themes that are similar to the feedback from employees such as a commitment to non-discrimination and equal opportunity principles, the removal of barriers to access for underserved communities and the fostering of an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

KBOR's new strategic plan, *Building a Future*, stresses a statewide need to address enrollment equity gaps for multiple student groups. Data from the Regents includes an underrepresentation by Hispanic Latino students at four-year institutions (-6%); gaps for rural students in excess of 10% for attendance at two- and four-year institutions; and a declining college going rate percentage for Kansas high school graduates.

Other information from KBOR about the performance of students who meet the Perkins V guidelines and are counted as a member of a "special population" shows this group of CTE students are successful, but accessibility may still be a roadblock. Access to campus sites, technology, transportation and even housing may be an issue for prospective students who desire to earn technical certification or current students who may face issues hindering retention, including but not limited to these special populations:

- Youth under the age of 21 who have aged out of the foster care system
- Individuals with disabilities
- Homeless students
- Single parents, including pregnant women

Other stakeholder groups gave a mean score of 4.09 for item, *Cowley College facilities are generally accessible to persons with physical disabilities*, on the recent community stakeholder survey.

	Cowley College facilities are generally accessible to persons with physical disabilities.
Current Student	4.19
Employees	4.00
Future Student	4.00
High School Partner	4.06
Parent, High School Student	4.42
Parent, College-aged student	4.04

The feedback below is aligned with demographic changes for both the College and its community:
- Lack of services to meet the unique needs of adult learners such as daycare and nontraditional College-owned housing
- Need for increased opportunities to support success for underserved students
- Establishing a campus culture that builds student relationships through inclusiveness, multiple voice expression, and belonging
- Increasing diversity within the employee base
- Need for development of services (support, outreach) unique to individual student groups
- Meeting needs resulting from local community language barriers

Priority Four: Relevance

76% of participants in a recent survey by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) shared feedback that education after high school continues to offer a good return on investment but 48% of those same respondents also held mixed opinions about affordability and access ("Varying Degrees," New America).

The face of education is rapidly changing across both the two- and four-year sector with the entrance of online, nonprofit "mega universities" offering large numbers of online programs; the impact of student debt both during and after degree completion; and the current hesitations about the value of a transfer program degree. To continue the vitality and relevancy of its transfer pathway programs and increase the number of graduates in those programs, it will be critical for the College to be able to communicate the value of general education to both current and future students and deliver it in innovate ways. The nationwide emphasis on workforce-ready programs can be harnessed by Cowley College to strengthen and increase career and technical education offerings; this type of strategy coordinates well with the increasing numbers of potential students interested in short term certificates, licenses, noncredit education and microcredentials (Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, The Overlooked Value of Certificates and Associate's Degrees: What Students Need to Know Before They Go to College, 2020).

The recent COVID-19 pandemic drove many shifts in the workplace, with some remaining in place post-pandemic. These changes include increased numbers of employers choosing the new remote workplace over a physical location and the discontinuation of jobs and roles due to automation and other factors, driving up the number of displaced workers. These trends and many others make new ways to deliver training in shorter time frames imperative (Bennett, V., Lee, S., McDonnell, R., & Ostrye, Mary. Redesigning training programs for the COVID era and beyond. *Jobs for the Future*, ERIC Number ED611246, October 2020).

The pandemic also disrupted higher education's "business as usual" model, forcing many institutions across the nation to adopt and develop new ways of supporting students through enhanced technology. Highlights from research about campus impact nationally are:

- Part-time faculty, already the lowest remunerated in higher education, endured the worst economic hardship along with increased lack of job security (*The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020*-21/ American Association of University Professors)
- Faculty diversity hiring fell during the pandemic (Flaherty, C. Faculty diversity fell in time of crisis. *Inside Higher Ed*, October 18, 2021)
- Spring 2021 graduates had fewer opportunities for internships and received fewer job offers when compared to 2020 spring graduates (Carrasco, M. Fewer job offers for the latest class of COVID-19. *Inside Higher Ed,* November 3, 2021)
- Increase in support needed for students affected by long COVID including but not limited to financial instability due to loss of employment, psychological effects, and physical symptoms including loss of memory and/or ability to concentrate. (Redden, E. Support students with long COVID. *Inside Higher Ed*, October 22, 2021)
- Changes in enrollment patterns and demographics, lowering numbers of high school graduates and family expectations about the purpose of a college degree (Recruiting and retaining students in a challenging market. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 2021)

Stakeholder feedback for community stakeholder survey item, *Cowley College has adequate information technology infrastructure*, included an overall mean score of 4.12.

	Cowley College has adequate information technology infrastructure
Current Student	4.25
Employees	3.93
Future Student	4.11
High School Partner	4.25
Parent, High School Student	4.06
Parent, College-aged student	3.96

Focus group participant recommendations to support continued organizational relevancy include:

- Open lines of communication with four-year colleges that expand higher education partnerships to support seamless transfer for students
- Modernization of the College to remain relevant
- Creation of excellent environments to supplement the student experience
- Adaptation and expansion to meet changes in higher education after the COVID-19 pandemic

Priority Five: Community

Feedback about the institution's image in the community rose to the surface during multiple focus group sessions with shared opinions that highlighted the importance of trust and relationship building. Participants emphasized the importance of value perception for both higher education degree attainment and the local image of Cowley College with statements that Cowley College "needs to be essential", "foundational", and a "driver for the town." More than one participant wondered how the College could increase its appeal to underserved and non-traditional prospective students within the local community.

Information from the Kansas Department of Education shows a significantly smaller number of Cowley County residents, age 25+, have achieved a Bachelor's degree or higher when compared with the rest of the state and the nation: Cowley County= 21.8%; Kansas = 33.4%; US = 32.1%. Additionally, high school drop-out rate (3-year average) for Cowley County is 2.1%; this higher rate puts local residents at a disadvantage when compared to other counties in the College's KBOR service area and the state (Sumner County = 1.1%; Kansas 1.7%). Finally, the percentage of K-12 students in Cowley County who qualify for free lunch has increased 4.7% from 2018-2019 (48.9%) to 2020-2021 (53.6%); if this trend continues, the College will need to develop resources to meet a growing community financial need.

Recommendations for strengthening relationships to impact image and value perception, listed below, are supported from feedback received through the community stakeholder survey.

- Expanding relationships with employers and workforce entities to strengthen the KBOR service area workforce
- Developing KBOR service area relationships for community development and new business creation
- Expanding community outreach to improve community perception; Increasing engagement with the local community
- Increasing accountability to demonstrate value return for the taxpaying constituency
- Creating branding that makes Cowley College stand out from the other Kansas community colleges
- Expanding relationships outside traditional course enrollment with KBOR service area high school students
- Creating opportunities with KBOR service area schools to meet declining high school headcounts and enrollment in college after high school completion
- Increasing the College's appeal to local students

Feedback from the 2021 Cowley College Strategic Planning Community Stakeholder Survey
Mean score; 5-point Likert Scale where 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest score.

Cowley College presents an engaging community presence			
Stakeholder Type		Area of Involvement, All Stakeholder Types	
Advisory Committee Member	3.56	Cowley County	4.17
Alumni	3.98	Sedgwick County	4.22
Business Partner	4.00	Sumner County	4.07
Community Member	4.02		
Donor	3.96		
High School Partner	3.92		
Service Organization	4.54		
Other	4.00		

Feedback from the 2021 Cowley College Strategic Planning Community Stakeholder Survey, *continued*

Cowley College adequately serves the work force needs in our community.			
Stakeholder Type		**Area of Involvement, All Stakeholder Types**	
Advisory Committee Member	3.59	*Cowley County*	3.81
Business Partner	3.25	*Sedgwick County*	4.00
Community Member	3.63	*Sumner County*	3.98
Service Organization	3.92		
Other	3.47		

Cowley College partners well with area industries and businesses.			
Stakeholder Type		**Area of Involvement, All Stakeholder Types**	
Advisory Committee Member	3.53	*Cowley County*	3.73
Business Partner	3.33	*Sedgwick County*	4.00
Community Member	3.61	*Sumner County*	4.04
Service Organization	4.17		
Other	3.50		

Cowley College makes a positive impact on the community it serves.			
Stakeholder Type		**Area of Involvement, All Stakeholder Types**	
Advisory Committee Member	3.89	*Cowley County*	4.21
Business Partner	4.25	*Sedgwick County*	4.00
Community Member	4.27	*Sumner County*	4.27
Service Organization	4.38		
Other	4.00		

Cowley College offers a selection of programs that meets our community's needs.			
Stakeholder Type		**Area of Involvement, All Stakeholder Types**	
Advisory Committee Member	3.81	*Cowley County*	3.97
Alumni	3.78	*Sedgwick County*	4.22
Business Partner	3.33	*Sumner County*	4.11
Community Member	3.79		
Donor	3.74		
Future Student	3.90		
High School Partner	3.96		
Parent, High School Student	3.91		
Parent, College Student	4.00		
Service Organization	3.96		
Other	3.92		

Priority Six: Equip

As a former member of HLC's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) pathway, Cowley College will continue to demonstrate an organizational commitment to its employees. Including Equip as an institutional priority will further work last completed within Institutional Priority 3 Valuing People: *Cowley College is committed to the hiring, development, evaluation of faculty, staff, and administrators and creating a culture of mutual respect, appreciation and support that recognizes and encourages of employees as they continuously increase personal and professional development* (2018-2021 Cowley College Strategic Plan).

Focus group participant feedback aligned with comments received from employees for the 2020 Noel Levitz College Employee Survey (CESS):

- Continued investment in employee health initiatives to address workplace stress such as burnout (FGP)
- Continue to prioritize shared governance and increase trust through communication and transparency (FGP)
- Invest in faculty and staff development with corresponding measures of accountability to support quality in customer service (FGP)
- Develop, support and retain talent (FGP)
- Strengthening employee voice to drive positive change within the institution (FGP)
- Clear processes for onboarding and training (CESS)
- Create more incentives for employee contribution for elevating institutional production. (CESS)

Strategic Priority Team Creation

Following Board approval of the proposed, six institutional priorities, priority teams were constructed from internal stakeholders with interest in the focus of the priority along with members identified by their role on campus. Faculty and/or staff team leads were identified for each of the six teams with one administrative champion for each team.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness tasked each strategic priority team with the creation of overarching goals, supported by SMART goals, targets, and action plans.

Approved Institutional Priorities with Overarching Goals

PRIORITY 1 Focus: *Cowley College identifies and meets student needs through teaching and learning processes aligned with unique support systems to support its core mission, student success.*

Overarching Goals
1. Increase overall GPA in developmental course(s) (EBE and EBM)
2. Increase completion (with a C or better) in gateway courses (Comp 1, College Algebra, and College Algebra with Review)
3. Expand and increase student engagement with academic support services

PRIORITY 2 Impact: *Cowley College leverages resources to increase scope, minimize student constraints and improve operations.*

Overarching Goals
1. Address disparities in student attrition rates.
2. Standardize academic advising processes to increase student retention.
3. Increase enrollment and retention rates for Hispanic Latino students.

PRIORITY 3 Equity: *Cowley College creates a strong community that demonstrates inclusive and equitable treatment of its stakeholders.*

Overarching Goals
1. Create a culture of inclusion and belonging for all stakeholders through an emphasis on empathy.
2. Increase mental health awareness and develop support resources for students and employees.
3. Establish a source of financial support for Hispanic Latino students.

PRIORITY 4 Relevance: *Cowley College adapts to meet changes in higher education and stakeholder needs*

Overarching Goals
1. Maintain relevance and superiority through current and emerging technology for all stakeholders.
2. To ensure relevance by meeting student needs through program development, innovative scheduling and course offerings.

PRIORITY 5 Community: *Cowley College commits to the public good by creating engagement and value for its Regents-designated service area.*

Overarching Goals
1. Increase partnerships throughout the College's KBOR service area.
2. Increase engagement in the College's KBOR service area with a broader set of stakeholder groups.

PRIORITY 6 Equip: *Cowley College invests in its employees to create a culture that promotes personal and professional growth.*

Overarching Goals
1. Enhance employee professional knowledge and skills through training and development.
2. Promote a healthy work-life balance by recognizing each employee as a whole person.
3. Enhance communication to foster a greater sense of community and collaboration.

Priority One: FOCUS

Cowley College identifies and meets student needs through teaching and learning processes aligned with unique support systems to support its core mission, student success.

SMART Goal 1. Increase overall GPA in developmental course(s) (EBE and EBM)

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 1

The team created two additional SMART goals to drive improvements including:
- 1.a. Decrease remedial English course (EBE2208, English Composition Supplemental Seminar) DFW rate for online enrollments by 10% by the end of three years. (SMART)
- 1.b. Decrease remedial math course (EBM4405, Elementary Algebra) DFW rates. (SMART; Percentage to be determined at the end of eighteen months due to new grade weighting.)

English faculty updated course procedures to include requiring students enrolled in an online section of EBE2208 to have contact (face-to-face or virtual) with the Tiger Learning Center, Tutor.com, or the instructor.

English faculty communicated with Enrollment Management to reinforce knowledge regarding policy that requires enrollment in a face-to-face section of EBE2208 when a student is talking >= one face-to-face section of any other course.

English and math faculty investigated referral to ABE but discovered this type of response to student remedial needs is far more complicated than first thought because of the following factors:
- ABE is not always available due to managed enrollment;
- There is an additional cost for students to enrollment in ABE services;
- Students may feel discouraged by being referred to ABE when they already have a diploma;
- ABE curriculum includes reading instruction but only content-area writing instruction; and
  ABE does not have a physical presence on other Cowley campuses for referring students to.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

Goal 1: The overall GPA for enrollments in EBE2208 and EBM4405 was 2.01 for academic year 2022-2023; there was not a significant change when compared to the overall GPA for 2021-2022 (2.09).

Goal 1.a: The DFW rate for online enrollments in EBE2208, English Composition Supplemental Seminar, was 46.6% (34/73) for academic year 2022-2023. This change is an improvement of 18.9% when compared to online enrollments during academic year 2021-2022.

Goal 1.b: The DFW rate for all EBM4405, Elementary Algebra, was 37.9% (67/177) for academic year 2022-2023. This change is 3.5% higher when compared to enrollments during academic year 2021-2022. This information will contribute to the setting of a goal at the 18-month milestone.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

English and math faculty are Investigating the creation of a one-credit English and a one-credit math review course similar to Biology Review.

Representatives from English, Math, and Enrollment will continue to work together to refine the existing process for new students who assess too low for EBE or EBM.

Math faculty are responding to changes implemented by the Regents including a move away from pre-requisite content delivery format to co-requisite or embedded. Because the Regents have not finalized changes, faculty are participating in meetings with the Kansas Core Outcomes Group (KCOG) and KBOR staff to solidify content and delivery expectations. Math faculty hope to have course content ready for implementation during 2024 fall.

The team investigated the use of ABE Center services for students who do not test into EBE nor EBM, but were unable to implement any action due to complexity of the issue which included cost of ABE Center attendance for students. Faculty and Enrollment Management will continue to work together in Year 2 to refine the existing process for new students with placement scores that do not lead to enrollment in EBE or EBM courses. Additionally, a new, proposed process to be developed by each department's faculty to refer a student who does not demonstrate readiness during the first two to three weeks of the semester even though their assessment scores or other placement scores indicated readiness.

SMART Goal 2. Increase completion (grade of C or better) in gateway courses (Composition I, College Algebra, and College Algebra with Review) to meet or exceed the completer success rate (# of ABC/# of ABCDFW) baseline of 77.9% for gateway courses.

Year One Activity Supporting SMART Goal 2

Faculty worked with Enrollment Management to implement needed change to placement score entry in J1 to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship of placement in the course with course success.

Faculty reorganized the placement chart to include a prioritization of placement type with a recommended three-year maximum placement criteria retention for scores/grades. Placement option order from most preferred to least is: ACT subject test score; SAT subject test score; Accuplacer subject test score; and High School grade in subject. Recommendation was approved in October 2022 by Academic Affairs with revised guidelines in place for 2022-2023 spring enrollment.

The Educational Navigator investigated platforms to track and evaluate the success of student referrals to the Tiger Learning Center. The subsequent recommendation to purchase *Accudemia* was made with the platform implemented during 2022-2023.

Faculty designed a pilot enrollment process for students whose first language is not English using English language test scores. Each student will complete a standardized English proficiency exam as part of entrance requirements (Beginner (EAP), Intermediate (Comp. 1 w Seminar), Advanced (Comp. 1)). Students whose native languages are English will follow the same requirements as students from the U.S.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 2

Goal 2. The success rate for gateway course enrollments for academic year 2022-2023 was 79.5%, exceeding the 77.9% target.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 2

The team successfully developed processes so appropriate data can be collected during Year 2 for better analysis of the relationship between course placement and course success. The team will continue to focus efforts on course placement for students who need English language support (ESL).

SMART Goal 3. Expand and increase student engagement with academic support services.

Year One Activity Supporting SMART Goal 3. Expand and increase student engagement with academic support services

The team created additional SMART goals to drive improvements including:

- Goal 1.a: Obtain report using historical data of courses repeated twice and classes repeated three times to establish baseline for areas of need and measurement of future efforts.
- Goal 1.b: Design and rearrange the physical space to accommodate all academic success services
- Goal 2.a: Create marketing strategies through various avenues including Blackboard and Cowley Connect, to educate and encourage the use of all modalities of support services to achieve a +0.25 increase of student satisfaction on the Noel Levitz "Tutoring services are readily available."
- Goal 2.b: Evaluate existing instructional technologies and implement them into the tutoring processes (all modalities)
- Goal 3.a: Determine key factors from the SCORE Team that identify at risk, particularly those repeating courses, and integrate processes with data dashboards to increase retention
- Goal 3.b: Review the existing structure of coordinators and tutors and design a hiring and reporting structure to include the education navigator

The team reviewed data from the IE Office about students who retaken gateway and remedial courses multiple times; however, the number of instances of this type of enrollment behavior was small because the majority of the repeats were due to course withdrawal and not a graded, course completion. This better understanding prompted the team to pivot to use of the Student Risk dashboard to identify the students who may benefit from increased engagement with the Tiger Learning Center (TLC).

The team reviewed technology to facilitate better tracking of student engagement at TLC and recommended Accudemia, a cloud-based academic center management system, for its capability to track student sign ins at TLC. The platform also provides increase access for students to schedule appointments and track personal session logs.

With the purchase of Accudemia, the Educational Navigator began work with the IE Office and Datatelligent, a Tableau partner, to create a set of dashboards. These dashboards serve two primary purposes: to track the DFW rates for remedial, gateway and high DFW rate courses and to determine if student engagement with the services provided by the TLC are effective at driving student success.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 3

Goal 3: The team successfully expanded and increase student engagement with academic support services through a facility space redesign to bring the College's ABE Center and TLC into the same location for student access (Goal 1.b.); increased marketing strategies on social media, placement of a direct link to the TLC webpage on the Blackboard landing page, and Cowley Connect (2.a.); created new technological infrastructure to link student engagement with academic success (3.a.); and increased the number of subjects and tutors to meet student academic needs (3.b.). Additionally, technology for virtual sessions was expanded to meet the needs of students unable to attend TLC events and/or tutoring sessions in person.

More information about success for Goal 2.a. increase student satisfaction mean for the Noel Levitz item, "Tutoring services are readily available," will be determined with the April 2025 administration of the survey.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 3

The team will continue to work to optimize TLC's space with improvements to be made for the lightboard area and possible addition of partitions to reduce sound reverberation and create a more permanent space for virtual study sessions. Data collected from Accudemia indicates that TLC needs to increase outreach and engagement with students in the online setting and at other campuses. The Educational Navigator will continue to build institutional knowledge about course success through analysis of DFW rates and student engagement at TLC using the new dashboard.

Priority Two: IMPACT

Cowley College leverages resources to increase scope, minimize student constraints and improve operations.

SMART Goal 1. Address disparities in student attrition rates with procedures tailored to support the students' needs.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 1

Stop out information for a variety of student subgroups was reviewed by the team, ending in the selection of interventions for the first-year experience of first-time, degree seeking students for a focus during Year One.

To support efforts to retain first time, college students, the team reviewed data from the fall term's First Year Experience course. Because alcohol violations continue to be concerning among residential housing students, a dashboard was created with data from the Get Inclusive: Alcohol and Other Drugs' pre- and post-assessments. A second dashboard using data from the Get Inclusive: Mental Well-Being pre- and post-assessment data was also created due to the feedback provided by students during and post-pandemic.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

The team reviewed data for the two Get Inclusive modules that indicates student growth due to the curriculum. Post-assessment results showed students were more willing to get help, held a stronger belief in their responsibility to offer help, and would be more willing to intervene on behalf of another after participating in the module. Information from the Alcohol and Other Drugs module saw increased, post-assessment, means scores for responsible behavior and seeking help if alcohol or drug use was a personal problem.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

The team will continue to create a baseline for the Get Inclusive modules using the pre-and post-module assessments and created a plan to expand the information collected to include more variables that indicate a successful first year for a first-time college student. These variables include:
- $0 balance to remove barrier to re-enrollment;
- GPA >=2.0;
- Completion of 35% or more of the credit hours in their degree or certificate program;
- Low student debt load (Dollar amount to be determined)
- Successful English and math gateway course completion along with any required remediation; and,
- A sense of belonging at Cowley College, to be determined with a survey administered during the first fall.

<p style="text-align:center">SMART Goal 2. Standardize academic advising processes to increase student retention.</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Activity Supporting SMART Goal 2</p>

The College's Academic Advising Council (AAC) created sub-goals to support SMART Goal 2:

- 2.a. The AAC will develop training for first-time advisors and regular, continuing training for all advisors on rotating topics;
- 2.b. The ACC will create a rubric to assess institutional advising program quality; and,
- 2.c. The ACC will standardize the use of early alert messages to advisors to identify and address issues for students to prevent drop-out.

<p style="text-align:center">Year One Progress for SMART Goal 2</p>

Goal 2.a. Goal 2.a. was met through the creation of two, distinct trainings: one for new advisors, to be completed at the end of the first semester of employment, and a second for employees continuing in an advisor role.

Information collected using the New Advisor Survey from two of five new hires for 2022 fall indicated the new advisors were primarily using the Faculty Advising and Retention Module in Cowley Connect and the Advisor Starter Kit in Blackboard as core tools. Additionally, new advisors were using multiple tools for academic advising appointments, for note-taking and communication with students. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=I haven't tried this tool yet to 5=I have received training and can use this tool effectively; new advisor means scores for advising tools included:

Tool	Mean Score	Tool	Mean Score
Advisor Training Kit	3.5	Retention Module	4.0
Faculty Advising	4.5	Signal Vine	1.5
J1 Web Advising	1.50	Student Risk Dashboard	3.5
J1 Web Academic Planning Tool	2.0		

Additional qualitative feedback from new advisors included the need to streamline advising tools and increase training opportunities.

Goal 2.b. Goal 2.b. was met through the creation of the Academic Advising Program Assessment rubric by the AAC. Rubric dimensions to assess the overall quality of academic advising at Cowley College include Academic Advising Program Learning Outcomes; Pedagogy of Critical Thinking; Advising Curriculum; and Means of Delivery.

Goal 2.c. Goal 2.c. was met through standardization of alerts and platform usage and creation of user training by the College's Educational Navigator.

<p style="text-align:center">Next Steps for SMART Goal 2</p>

The following actions will take place to continue increasing the value of academic advising through standardized processes during Year Two:

- Creation of consistent training document for use of Student Risk Dashboard to include scenarios;
- Create a strategy to determine the effectiveness of the Student Risk dashboard to assess the connection between "touches" with retention, including information about goals to meet with advisees during the first 30 days;
- Develop infrastructure in the Blackboard Advising Kit to track accountability for advisor use of trainings

Information from Blackboard showed that 88% of advisors (*N*=67) accessed the Advisor Training Kit during 2022-2023. More work will be needed during Year Two to meet a goal of 100% usage by advisors.

The annual Advisor Satisfaction Survey means results shows advisors feel prepared to advise, understand what is expected, and receive feedback but the 2022 fall administrations show increased concerns about the effectiveness of the academic advising process. The team will continue to work on effectiveness during Year Two.

	2021	2022
I would rate Cowley's academic advising process as very effective.	4.2	3.8
Cowley College has prepared me to succeed as an academic advisor.	4.3	4.1
I receive adequate feedback regarding my advising skills.	3.8	4.1
I understand what is expected of me as an advisor.	4.6	4.6

SMART Goal 3. Increase enrollment and retention rates for Hispanic Latino students.

The team identified two sub-goals to drive success for Goal 3:
- 3.a. Increase enrollment by degree-seeking, Hispanic Latino students 1% each year for the three years of the strategic planning cycle; and,
- 3.b. Increase retention of first time, degree seeking, Hispanic Latino fall cohort members to meet or exceed 60% (2021-2022 rate).

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 3

Team members reviewed data including IPEDS graduation rates for Hispanic Latino students; information about success for first time, full time, degree-seeking Hispanic Latino students; peer comparison information from the Kansas Higher Education Statistics (KHEStats) portal; and, information about Hispanic Latino high school students from the Kansas Department of Education's Report Generator.

Year One focus included an audit of current materials, both in print and online to remove language barriers to increase access to higher education; building relations with prospective, local Hispanic Latino students through collaborative work. The team worked with other Enrollment Management staff to create a version of the College's View Book in Spanish.

The College added a second full time, bilingual employee at the Wichita site and helped to provide translation services at all Financial Aid Department FAFSA nights.

The team sponsored two events to highlight Hispanic Latino culture and success. The first, Danza Night, featured traditional dancers from Wichita, Kansas; the second featured an alumnus: Dr. Sara Mata, the Hispanic Service Institution's Executive Director at Wichita State University.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 3

Goal 3.a.: Goal 3.a. was not met. Enrollment by degree-seeking Hispanic Latino students for the 2022-2023 academic year saw a 9.1% decrease when compared to 2021-2022 and 4.4% when compared to the three-year average for 2019-2020 through 2021-2022. A deeper look at the data shows enrollment by first-time, full time, degree seeking Hispanic Latino college students showed no change in headcount from 2021-2022 but enrollment did decline 17.9% (*N*=5 students) for part time students. Enrollment by Hispanic Latino high school students also declined insignificantly from 67 for 2021-2022 to 64 for 2022-2023.

Goal 3.b.: Goal 3.b. was met with an increase in 3% for all, first-time, degree-seeking Hispanic Latino students.

First to Second Fall Retention: First Time, Degree-Seeking, Hispanic Latino Students

	Fall Cohort Year			
Cohort Group	2019	2020	2021	2022
All Cohort Members	53% of 70	60% of 73	60% of 72	63% of 63
Full Time Cohort Members	49% of 57	68% of 63	66% of 56	69% of 54
Part Time Cohort Members	69% of 13	10% of 10	38% of 16	33% of 9

Next Steps for SMART Goal 3

The team will continue to focus on full time students and continued collaboration with the Adult Basic Education Center's English as a Second Language (ESL) student group.
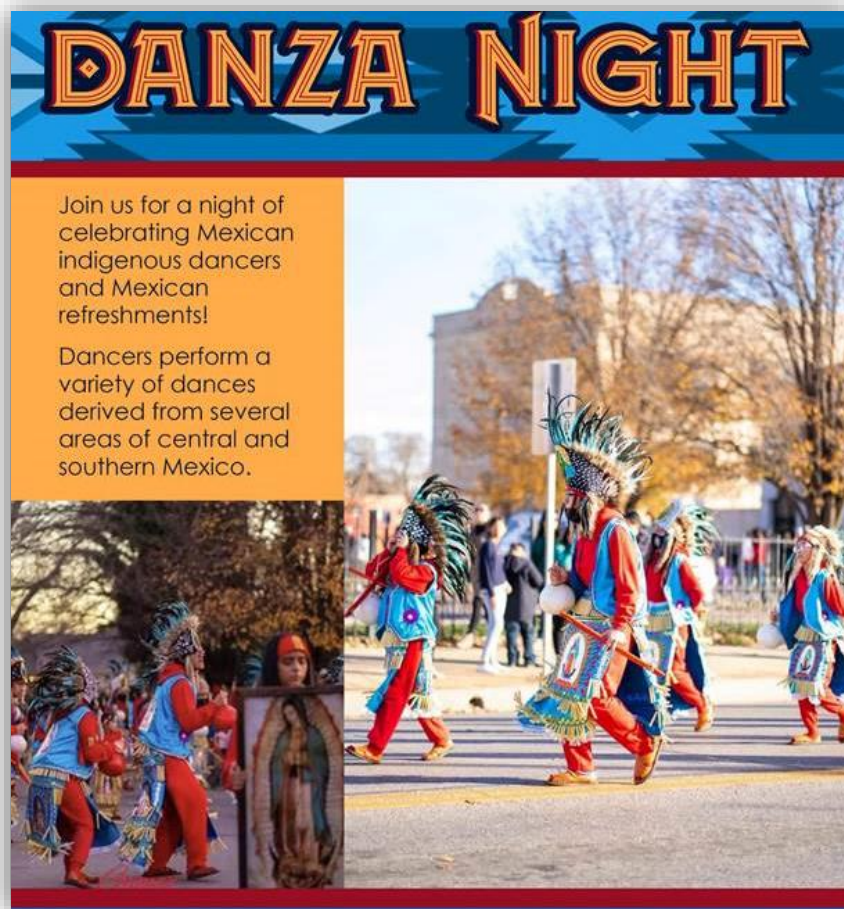
Priority Three: EQUITY
Cowley College creates a strong community that demonstrates inclusive and equitable treatment of its stakeholders.

SMART Goal 1. Create a culture of inclusion and belonging for all stakeholders through an emphasis on empathy.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 1

The team identified sub-goals to support the successful completion of Goal 1.

- 1.a. Work with Human Resources to reduce bias in requisition and selection of a qualified workforce through procedures and processes that reach a wider pool of qualified candidates and provide a better candidate experience.
- 1.b. Review complaint policies and procedures for consistency gaps and bias.
- 1.c. Increase a campus-wide sense of belonging.

Possible actions in support of Goal 1.a. were identified during 2022 fall to include posting job opportunities on diverse workforce boards, establishing bias definition, identification of best practices in hiring processes, and annual unconscious bias training for employees.

The team evaluated campus climate survey instruments, selecting to work with Insight into Diversity® to administer Insight Viewfinder® Campus Climate surveys for employees and students during the 2022-2023 spring term.

At the invitation of the team, Dr. Alex Red Corn, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and K-State Indigenous Faculty and Staff Alliance Co-Chair, presented information about tribal history in the United States, tribal partnerships, and information about pursing a Title IV grant to support indigenous students in two sessions, one to the College's Administrative Council and a second to employees and community members.

Team members facilitated a DEIB session during the 2022 fall Professional Development Day, collecting qualitative information on belonging from attending employees. Employees responded to three questions: How does Cowley College create a sense of belonging for students; What are we asking them to belong to; and, What are other basic needs of students? Employees highlighted opportunities for students that included participation in athletics, clubs and other activities and important basic needs such as safety, opportunity, representation, acceptance, inspiration, and financial stability.

Team members worked with the student club, Voices Heard, to create multiple opportunities for students and employees to engage in cultural events that highlight student subgroups, including a performance by the Wichita War Dancer and a Hispanic Heritage Month podcast during 2022-2023. Partnership with Voices Heard also included an interview during Women's History Month with Dr. Michelle Schoon, the College's first female President. The team created a template for institutional recognition of Heritage Months to create inclusion for all student sub-groups.

Four team members attended the annual Michael Tilford Conference on Diversity and Multiculturalism at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Additionally, two team members participated in monthly meetings sponsored by KBOR with the four-year college Chief Diversity Officers.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

Goal 1.a: Goal 1.a. was not met during Year One.

Goal 1.b: Goal 1.b. was not met during Year One.

Goal 1.c: Goal 1.c. was not met during Year One; the team will redirect effort to focus on Goals 1.a. and 1.b.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

The team will focus on reviewing best practices in hiring to make recommendations for standardizing the process including but not limited to providing training for key people on hiring committees and complete a plan for employee training in unconscious bias to continue action to support Goal 1.a.

The team will compile and review student complaint policies and procedures to review for consistency gaps and bias during Year Two to support the successful completion of Goal 1.b.

Advocacy for a full-time equivalent employee position for a diversity office was initiated by the team but was not viable due to revenue constraints. The team will continue to discuss how to support students without a designated position in Year 2.

The team received the results from both the employee and student surveys in May 2023 and will evaluate the data to select areas to drive improvements through action to support student success and employee satisfaction. The team will continue to partner with Voices Heard to embed cultural events to increase institutional knowledge that increases a sense of belonging for student subgroups.

SMART Goal 2. Increase mental health awareness and develop support resources for students and employees.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 2

The team expanded to include participation by the Director of Student Life, Campus Nurse, and Campus Counselor to meet Goal 2. The Goal 2 team decided to use data from the "How are You Feeling?" mental health survey initiated in the fall of 2021 to create a baseline to set a specific SMART goal from. Additional sub-goals to support Goal 2 included:

- 2.a: Increase opportunities for mental health training and programming for students; and,
- 2.b.: Create mental health training and/or programming for employees.

The team partnered with Four County Mental Health of Arkansas City to offer Mental Health First Aid Classes for Cowley College employees during the fall of 2022-2023. Students and employees established the first chapter of Hope Squad on a Kansas community college campus during 2022 fall, offering two meetings each month to train student peer leaders to identify signs of depression and suicidal risk among

their peers. The team continued to offer "Yoga on the Lawn," an opportunity for both employees and students to learn specific techniques to reduce stress and increase both mental and physical wellness.

The 2022 fall administration of the mental health survey showed the overall mental health of students improved since the first administration in 2021 with a +0.43 increase to the mean for survey item, "Overall, how would you rate your mental health?" (Mean change from 2.73 for 3.16 on a five-point scale). The team worked with the Institutional Effectiveness Office to create a dashboard to monitor the results for the 11-item survey.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 2

Goal 2.a: Goal 2.a. was met through the establishment of a chapter of Hope Squad on the main campus along with coordinated training for student peer leaders and both faculty and staff leads.

Goal 2.b.: Goal 2.b. was met through employee training through Hope Squad materials and through a local mental health agency.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 2

The next steps to improve the mental health of Cowley College's students is to continue to promote Hope Squad, add more student members, offer more Hope Squad activities on campus that promote a positive focus on mental health, and to continue to offer trainings for our employees to be able to recognize signs that our students might need help.

Information from the mental health survey showed a higher percentage of female students selected "Poor" or "Somewhat Poor" in response to the overall mental health survey item. The highest frequency in responses from all students to "During the past two weeks, how often has your mental health affected your ability to attend classes and/or complete your class work?" was "Not at all," indicating that students are managing stress comparatively well. The team will review survey results again during fall 2023 to continue with goal setting.

The team faced disruption during the fall semester due to the discontinuance of both physical and mental health services. The Director of Student Life will continue to lead Goal 2 activities, collect baseline daa using the mental health survey, and create action through the Hope Squad.

SMART Goal 3. Establish an avenue of financial support for Hispanic Latino students.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 3

Work toward Goal 3 was placed on hold during Year One due to the President Office fundraising for a new program in rodeo during the fall semester and the new career and technical education building during the spring semester.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 3

With the successful fundraising for the new CTE building, the Director of IE and the CEO of the Cowley College Foundation will work together to create a funding "ask" document and generate a list of prospective donors for both an endowed scholarship source and unrestricted scholarship dollars during Year Two.

Priority Four: RELEVANCE

Cowley College adapts to meet changes in higher education and stakeholder needs

SMART Goal 1. Maintain relevance and superiority for all stakeholders through current and emerging technology.

### Activity Supporting SMART Goal 1

The team created one additional SMART goal to drive improvements to support Goal 1:

- 1.a. Create at least one, digital badge for one career and technical education (CTE) program during each year of the three-year strategic planning cycle

- 1.b. Create at least one, digital badge for one transfer pathway starting Year Two to continue for Year Three.

The team brainstormed to create the following list of ideas that might help meet both goals:
- New, year-long enrollment, allowing students to enroll in the fall and spring semesters simultaneously;
- Accelerated class offerings to allow students to progress quickly;
- Project-based learning;
- Professional studies formatting for career and technical programming (similar to current Nondestructive Training Technology program curriculum);
- Offer more classes with embedded credentials;
- Adapt scheduling to meet needs of students, i.e. synchronous learning options to complete degrees at location of choice; and
- Pair credentials and/or certifications with transfer pathways to bundle educational opportunities (Associate of Fine Art in Theater with a certificate in construction).

To maintain superiority through emerging technology, the College began the migration to Blackboard Ultra during 2022-2023 to include improvements in service to students such as a similar experience accessing courses on mobile devices versus a desktop computer. A spring pilot, managed by the Director of Distance Learning, launched during the spring term with a full conversion to be completed by the start of the 2023 fall term.
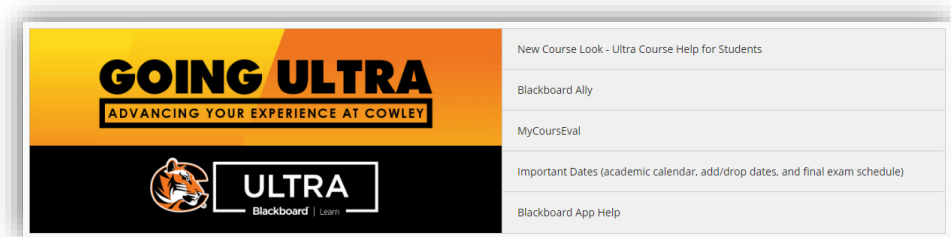
The team began work in 2022 fall to created digital badging for the Criminal Justice program to increase the number of institutional, short credentials available to students to support employment following award completion. The program's Advisory Council viewed a presentation of proposed badging with approval by the Council membership. Twelve badges launched during 2022-2023 with 103 individual badges issued to students. Each badge demonstrates rigor by including requirements of time spent in

specific workforce skill learning along with student application of skill(s) to demonstrate successful, acquisition of learning.

Digital badging expanded during 2022 spring to include specific, manufacturer training (Ford Motor Car Company) for students in the Automotive Technology program and specific Allied Health career skills.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

Goal 1.a. Goal 1.a. was met through the creation of digital badges for the Criminal Justice program.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

The team will continue to monitor student engagement and satisfaction with Blackboard Ultra to drive student satisfaction and success. The team will evaluate the performance gap for the Noel Levitz SSI item, "Blackboard is an effective tool for supplemental information for my traditional classes and on-line courses," for movement from a score of -0.41 to -0.31.

Digital badging for the Automotive Technology program will continue as the program's lead faculty works with Ford Motor Care Company on badge competencies.

Plans to increase digital badging to at least one, new CTE program and one, transfer pathway program's curriculum is to begin during Year Two.

SMART Goal 2. To ensure relevance and meet student needs through program development, innovative scheduling and course offerings.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 2

The team added two, additional SMART goals to support success for Goal 2 and decrease nationally normed. Student satisfaction performance gaps.

Goal 2.a: Decrease the performance gap from -0.44 to <= -0.31 for Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) item, "There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term" for the 2024-2025 spring administration.

Goal 2.b: Decrease the performance gap from -0.37 to <= -0.31 for Noel Levitz SSI item, "I am able to register for the classes I need with few conflicts," for the 2024-2025 spring administration.

The team was unable to achieve significant progress for Goal 2 due to changes to the General Education Common Core by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) in June 2022. This new core enables Cowley College's students to seamlessly transfer a significant number of general education credit hours to any of the state universities and colleges. Academic Affairs members of the team gathered information about the new requirements which necessitate the College to create seven, course "buckets." All active Cowley College courses were evaluated to determine which requirement they may qualify to meet with system-wide transfer courses currently not listed as meeting Humanities or Social Science department electives identified. Changes to the approved list of elective courses used to fulfill requirements were presented to Academic Affairs with approval during 2022 fall to only allow courses that are KBOR System Wide Transfer in the appropriate buckets to meet the new, General Education Corse requirements; exceptions will require presentation to Academic Affairs for approval.

Investigation during the creation of the spring schedule showed a need for face-to-face offerings of business courses in addition to typically offered courses in the online setting. Face to face courses in the Business Administration pathway were added to the spring schedule for the Arkansas City campus.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 2

Work on specific action directed toward improvement of performance gap scores for the Noel Levitz items has been suspended until the College meets the new requirements from the Regents.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 2

Once the review and outline of institution program pathways meet KBOR requirements (system-wide implementation by 2024 fall), then recommended semester course plans will be developed and outlined for each program pathway. Once this state-mandated change is complete, the team will return to the list of potential drivers listed above.

Priority Five: COMMUNITY

Cowley College commits to the public good by creating engagement and value for its Regents-designated service area.

SMART Goal 1. Increase engagement in the College's KBOR service area with a broader set of stakeholder groups.

The team created additional SMART goals to drive improvements including:

1. Increase partnerships in the entire KBOR service area and beyond through events
2. Increase engagement to reach more diverse stakeholders

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

The team brainstormed the following strategies to successfully meet its goal to increase partnerships in the KBOR service area:

- Expand K-12 engagement with robotics competitions at the Sumner campus;
- Begin one, new fall event at any campus;
- Begin one, new spring event at any campus;
- Increase events at a Mulvane campus;
- Increase sponsorships by three in different locations;
- Partner with at least one, non-profit organization or club; and,
- Engage with KBOR service area businesses.

Goal 1: The team successfully met Goal 1 through the following initiatives:

- Expansion of the Robotics Challenge from a one day to a three-day event to accommodate the number of K-12 participants (April 2023). The competition type expanded from an overall event to an advanced and basic with an equal number of teams for each day.
- The addition of four, new fall events:
  - "Faith in Blue," a collaborative activity with the Wellington, Kansas Police Department (October);
  - Ag Fun Day at the Sumner Campus with twenty community member participants;
  - Future Farmers of America (FFA) Foundation Meeting at the Sumner Campus with forty (40) attendees from the community and the College (November); and,
  - FFA Regional High School Chapters event with 220 high school students in attendance
- The addition of multiple, new spring events:
  - An expanded robotics challenge event to add one, new KBOR service area school, Wellington Eisenhower Elementary School. The total number of participating students for the event increased 20.3%, from a headcount of 128 to 154;
  - STEM Day at the Washington Elementary School in Wellington, Kansas with 95, K-8 students; and,
  - Young Entrepreneurships at the Caldwell, Kansas, High School with eight teams participating and top two teams advancing to the state competition at Kansas State University.
- Four new sponsorships in 2022-2023 including the Wellington Lion's Club Christmas Tree; "Story Walk," library event in Mulvane; athletic team (wrestling, volleyball) events; Oxford, Kansas, Chamber of Commerce Watermelon Feed; and Cowley College banners for downtown street pools in Oxford, Kansas.

- Employee participation at the Big Brothers Big Sisters annual bowling tournament and the Miss Cowley County pageant, and service to veterans through flag planting and take down at the Wellington, Kansas, cemetery (Memorial Day weekend).

Goal 2: The team met this goal through increased diversification of participant age to include:
- Expansion of robotics programming to involve more adults through the "Mind Storm Mash" competition at the Wheat Festival in Wellington, Kansas. A minimum of one adult with each 10+ year old participant for each opportunity with six teams participating; and,
- The addition of E-gaming activities for high school and college students at the Sumner Campus.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

The team plans to continue the new events and partnerships begun during Year One and to seek specific opportunities at the Mulvane Science, Engineering and Academics (SEA) campus. The team faced disruption due to leadership change for the College's Workforce Education Center and will continue to seek increased opportunities to engage with KBOR service area businesses during Year Two.

Priority Six: EQUIP

Cowley College invests in its employees to create a culture that promotes personal and professional growth.

SMART Goal 1. Enhance employee professional knowledge and skills through training and development.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 1

The team created additional SMART goals with targets to drive improvements including:

- 1.a. Continue to enhance and improve college onboarding with the following targets[2] for Noel Levitz College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS) item satisfaction means (+0.25 annually for three years):
  - My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say: 4.18 to 4.93;
  - I am proud to work at this institution: 4.21 to 4.96;
  - My supervisor helps me improve my job performance: 4.04 to 4.79;
  - My supervisor models the core values of People, Accountability, Integrity and Leadership: 4.10 to 4.85;
  - My supervisor provides supportive and constructive feedback: 4.12 to 4.87; and,
  - The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor: 4.05 to 4.80
- 1.b. Promote a culture that develops and promotes talent from within with the following CESS satisfaction means targets:
  - I have adequate opportunities for training to improve my skills: 3.58 to 4.33 and
  - I have adequate opportunities for professional development: 3.60 to 4.35.
- 1.c. Evaluate processes for succession planning at every level of the organization
  - Increase the satisfaction mean for the Noel Levitz CESS item, "I have adequate opportunities for advancement," from 3.35 to 4.10 (+0.25 annually for three years).

Goal 1.a: Goal 1.a. is in progress with improvements to onboarding processes within the Human Resources Office. Because the CESS does not provide data isolated to splice out employees hired during the academic year, the Director of Human Resources created a new hires survey to collect information using the Noel Levitz CESS items. Additional enhancements to the onboarding process included the creation of a New Hire Preparation Checklist to ensure the employee has technology access, email, keys. employee handbook review, role permissions in the student information system, prior to or on the first day.

Goal 1.b: The team solicited feedback from the full-time employee base to determine desired skills training. To meet this need, the Tiger Training Academy was created during the fall of 2022-2023 as a way to deliver both in-person and recorded trainings to employees. Trainings focused both on specific, workplace skills such as Microsoft Excel; institutional platforms including the intranet and Schooldude; and, generalized training including fire safety

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[2] The targets used for this initiative represent the satisfaction means for the total, full-time employee base. Information that isolates the satisfaction of new hires is not available in the data provided to the College by Noel Levitz to protect the anonymity of responses.

with the Arkansas City Fire Department. The team solicited feedback from participants (Please rate the following statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is Strongly disagree and 5 is Strongly agree: Participating in this training helped me improve my professional knowledge) through a fall and spring survey with mean results of 3.9 for the fall and 4.2 for the spring trainings.

Goal 1.c: The team selected specific targets to support the goal, however, action to be led by the President's Office was delayed to direct resources to new academic and athletic program creation.

Year One Progress for SMART Goal 1

Goal 1.a: Goal 1.a. is on track with activities to meet this goal during Year One. Data from the internal new hires survey for Year One indicates a high level of satisfaction for employees hired during 2022-2023.

28 participants using a scale of 1 to 7:	Mean
My supervisor pays attention to what I have to say.	6.93
I am proud to work at this institution.	6.89
My supervisor helps me improve my job performance.	6.68
My supervisor models the core values of People, Accountability, Integrity and Leadership.	6.86
My supervisor provides supportive and constructive feedback.	6.71
The work I do is appreciated by my supervisor.	6.82

Goal 1.b: Goal 1.b. was met through the creation of the Tiger Training Academy and the delivery of six, in-person trainings and the placement of seven video trainings in the intranet during 2022-2023.

Goal 1.c: Goal 1.c. was not met.

Next Steps for SMART Goal 1

Goal 1.a: HR will continue with the improvements established during Year One and review the data from the next administration of the CESS in the spring of Year Two.

Goal 1.b: While employee feedback for the face to face Tiger Training Academy sessions were positive, attendance by employees was small. Because of this, the team will continue to deliver video trainings from Professional Development Day events to employees during 2023-2024 and review the CESS results when available to them to plan improvements for Year Three.

Goal 1.c: The team will re-engage with the President and/or the Administrative Council to restart the initiative during Year Two.

SMART Goal 2. Promote a healthy work-life balance by recognizing each employee as a whole person.

Activity Supporting SMART Goal 2

The team added three additional SMART goals to improve work-life balance for employees and support the successful completion of SMART Goal 2 with increased satisfaction means for Noel Levitz CESS items:
- 2.a. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution: 3.28 to 3.53;
- 2.b. This institution consistently follows processes for recognizing employee achievements: 3.01 to 3.26;
- 2.c. The work I do is valuable to the institution: 4.03 to 4.28; and
- 2.d. This institution does a good job o meeting the needs of faculty/staff/administrators: 3.51 to 4.26.

Action during Year One to support Goal 2 include the new, "Meet the Staff Friday" communication from the Human Resources Office. The purpose of this new communication is to enhance relationships among

colleagues through the sharing of the employee's picture in a casual setting along with answers to questions about a variety of non-work related topics. The College's THRIVE Committee creates additional opportunities for employees to participate in activities to balance workplace stress.

<div align="center">**Year One Progress for SMART Goal 2**</div>

Goals 2.a. through 2.d: The team is on track to successfully the identified targets and review the data from the next administration of the CESS in the spring of Year Two.

<div align="center">**Next Steps for SMART Goal 2**</div>

Human Resources and the THRIVE Committee will continue to create opportunities to the College's employees. The team will revisit the original list of proposed actions including but not limited to an employee recognition program during Year Two.

SMART Goal 3. Enhance internal communication to foster a greater sense of community and collaboration.

<div align="center">**Activity Supporting SMART Goal 3**</div>

The team added three additional SMART goals to improve communication to and with employees by departments and leaders to increase satisfaction means for Noel Levitz CESS items:

- 3.a. Employee input is always solicited and considered before key decisions are made: 2.79 to 3.54; and I always have input into decisions that affect my job and/or work area: 3.42 to 4.17; and,
- 3.b. There are effective lines of communication between departments: 2.85 to 3.60.

<div align="center">**Year One Progress for SMART Goal 3**</div>

Goal 3.a: The team's focus for this goal included an emphasis on a shared governance mentality in striving to improve vertical communication. To achieve this goal, a team representative met with the Vice President of Finance and Administration to review and improve the shared governance form created during the 2018-2021 strategic plan.

Goal 3.b: The focus of Goal 3.b. was to institute procedures or tools to improve lateral communication among departments. To achieve this goal, continued action was developed with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) to continue the improvements in knowledge management resources during the previous strategic planning cycle. Actions during Year One included an increased the frequency of IE's "By the Numbers" newsletter to the campus and an increased delivery of Tableau dashboards to increase data democratization and improve data literacy.

<div align="center">**Next Steps for SMART Goal 3**</div>

Goal 3.a: The team will need to revisit the effectiveness of the shared governance form following the changes during Year Two.

Goal 3.b: The annual survey collection conducted by the IE Office indicated more interventions are needed to increase data literacy on campus. Feedback from the Knowledge Management showed a means score decrease from 3.50 to 3.44 for the AIR Data Governance Self-Study's dimension: Data Use. And while the means score for the Data Access dimension increased from 3.00 to 3.31, qualitative information included concerns about consistent access across employee groups and to the public. The Director of IE will increase the number of data literacy communications with the campus along with publication of By the Numbers newsletter on the website to increase public access. Additional research will be conducted to put together a set of commonly requested, "big numbers," to improve campus data literacy and work to publish more data sets to the public website will be investigated.

Appendix A
Campus-Wide SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

Community Strength due to COVID

Pandemic strengthened family values

Cowley's ability to accommodate the needs of potential students

People looking for education to better themselves & economically improve

Online/Hybrid

Safe environment, especially during COVID

State & community level involvement

Professional development team & opportunities & funding

Shared governance & employee input

Direct emails for example COVID@cowley.edu, admissions @cowley.edu, tell it to the president

Flat hierarchy system

Clubs

Processes in place for integrity, academic expectations etc.

Giving employees a chance to grow professionally by promoting from within

Emergency preparedness plan for online learning

Strategic leadership teams

Dedicated professions

Good performance criteria evaluations

Improved communication

Valuing input and people through previous strategic sessions

Positive evaluations

Increased enrollment

Customer service in meeting the needs of our students

Listening

Accreditation

State reporting

Course procedures

KBOR Course alignment for transfer

Evaluations

Transparency at the institution level

To grow & improve

Dedication to a quality education

Providing access to Tiger Connect information allows students to be more accountable

Accepting the fact students are less prepared than we want them

Satisfaction surveys looked good

Maintain retention baseline

Multiple locations

Having the choice to vaccine or mask or not

Academic integrity processes are strong and fair

STRENGTHS, *cont.*

Shared governance

Department relationships and trust

Regardless of issues/perceived issues, students' success is at the forefront

Plagiarism warning

Departments

Community

Academic Integrity policies

Better process for access of FERPA documents

Good reputation in our own community

Use of software programs to spot plagiarism

Use of HonorLock

Everyone stepped up during COVID

Listening to employee/student ideas and putting them into practice

CLAW

Efforts to expand and form relationships with universities

Inclusiveness of Mulvane, Wellington and Winfield

Dedicated and accessible faculty

Highly qualified faculty

Advising dedication and processes

GLO/PLO

Quality programs

Implement academic success course

Teacher/student ratio

Higher GPA due to starting at community college

Investment/interest from teachers

Clubs, activities and meeting with advisor

Shared governance, committees, P.D.

Programs to meet need/community career fairs

Know where we stand - get jobs now

Happy students

Proactive employees - collaborative spirit between employees & departments

Multiple sites

DEI Initiative

Workforce development programs

Faculty and staff engage with students and the community at their own costs

Accessibility focus

Serve diverse service areas

Early student pipeline

Prison outreach

Noel Levitz survey indicates high student satisfaction

Cowley College scored at or above other KS 2 year colleges in completion rates

Experienced in higher ed

Higher education staff is educated and qualified

Connections to other community organizations

Several people have taken leadership roles (Champions/Chairs) of SLTs

Long term employees which creates organizational knowledge

Program teams

Teamwork and set goals and directions for program upgrades

Professional development team & opportunities & funding

Most money put into account for professional development this year

Faculty and staff position ethical leaders try to incorporate positive ethical practices in classrooms and on campus

Time of day to offer classes, etc.

Employee passion

Employees involved in community - volunteerism

Quality instruction with flexibility in curriculum to deliver

WEAKNESSES

Poverty and low-income areas

Generation of students just want to know just what they need to know to get out and work and make money

Generations today just want to jump job to job - lack of longevity in job

Feedback loop on communication and follow up

Passive involvement

Fear

Apathy

Keeping academics first - lacking balance

Recruiting students who are academically ready for a college education

Using students for our own gain

Lack of consistency

Inconsistency on listening to committee input

Straying away from focus on student success

Lack of trust

Do what you say you're going to

Lack of consistency

Lack of trust

Lack of focus on student success

Communication

Implementation/continue efforts that we have done culturally that have improved our campus

When faculty and staff leave, and new hires don't pick the role up

Transparency at the work group level

Bias/conflict of interest

Helicopter parent mentality towards students

Holding all departments accountable for participation in training and decision making

Not recruiting aggressively enough

Mostly Kansas based students

Restricted CTE program space

Market AG more

Communication across departments and buildings

Inconsistency in following prescribed procedures and policies

Group consequences for the actions of the few

Plagiarism opportunities especially with increased online enrollment

Transparency with leadership/Board

Increase in borrowing of assignments and materials among groups of students that results in plagiarism and cheating

Students not informed of the conflict between athletics and various degree plans and classroom requirements

Communication

Maintenance of existing facilities

Lack of consistency in leadership

Money

CTE facility

Space

Many still fail or don't see the benefit

Failure to analyze the quality or quality in partnership in certain programs

Student confusion over degrees to pick, i.e. AA, AS, AAS, AGS

Website confusing

Undecided students still need assistance with careers

Too quick/easy to drop out (counseling/advising, blockade?)

Knowledge of college processes, W. F., Financial aid

Differences of teaching standards (full time vs adjunct)

Following deadlines (attendance)

Failure to acknowledge the nature of our students who are mostly non trad and mostly generational poverty

Community involvement

Local elementary, middle and high school outreach

Serving diverse populations - local and international, etc. (academically)

Non-traditional students

Poor communication between and administration and faculty still

Departments can be isolated

Awareness of satellite projects and opportunities

More accountability leadership from administration when it comes to its employees, students and their collective safety

WEAKNESSES, *cont.*

Lack of pathway (step by step) procedure enroll, secure funds, apply for scholarships, secure transportation. (Could be opportunity to create a graphic/handout for HS students to show them enrolment and completion is achievable)

Community support and knowledge about what we offer

How do we attract a more diverse student population and more diversity among student leadership

Provide opportunities for Cowley County citizens to be employed by Cowley while earning Bachelor degree

Limitations in advancement of leadership potentially drives people to other jobs away from Cowley Longevity

Have a harder time embracing change

Board longevity; by January longest Board member will be 4 years. New trustees might come in and create challenges

Ethical leader

Hard to evaluate what is right in everyone's life's/minds

Employer students and staff - Cannot always incorporate their ideas into programs or classes

F2F not being available for learning - COVID 'pivot'

Instructors may not know a student is struggling

Reduced population (rural areas) (KS Census 2020)

Wi-Fi access - student may not have access at home

OPPORTUNITIES

Affordability to better their future

Help and grow workforce center

A population of people who don't have any degree or certificate

People want to help and invest time into people

State and federal increased grants and funding

Market greater in states outside of our footprint. Work and other organizations & businesses out of area to obtain degrees (more partnerships & internships - out of state)

DEI

Recruit to groups that are not prevalent in counties close by

Communication

More campus involvement, clubs and organizations, etc.

Give students more opportunity to voice concerns/perspective (AC, Board meetings - encourage attendance)

Remedial courses for students who aren't ready for college

Workforce

Improve consistency in follow through

Improve positive community image

Improve consistency

Increase positive image in community

Become more transparent

Take a deeper dive into the physical way we value individuals

Do what we say we are going to do

OPPORTUNITIES, *cont.*

Working towards new innovative programs "thinking outside the box"

Current programs duplicated at different locations

Evaluating based on location and community needs/opportunity needs

Training on biases

Training on behavioral ethics

Training on interpreting data without bias

Allowing more student control

Rental apartment opportunities for non-traditional students

English as a second language, reaching out and showing our accommodations

Some type of placement test on the website

Expand CTE space or hours

Update education systems

Documentation

Improvements to the retention unit

Continuous improvement of shared governance

More training for DEI

Work on respecting the jobs the other side does

Stakeholder engagements in community

Stakeholder engagement with students

Stakeholder engagements with colleagues

More face to face interaction with community members

Continue better onboarding process; results in more consistent messaging from employees and clear communication of expectations to students & community

Career Center/Workforce

Fundraising

Properties (develop more)

International student population

Diversity

Online

Grant writer/assistant to Debbie Phelps

Purchasing coordinator

Updated and simplified website

Career/workforce expanded

Expand and utilize the coop ed courses

Advising/counseling before dropping course

FYE

Summer orientation

Relationships

Certificate programs - Jobs now!

Undervalued employees

Campuses are not physically accessible - not being proactive, only addressing as issues arise

Other sites (not main campus) often disenfranchised

OPPORTUNITIES, *cont.*

Pilot programs (combining trade programs and Associates)

Weekly update meetings could be at the other campuses not just the main

Expanding our service area?

Increasing work study opportunities for students to create a greater sense of commitment from students

Navigating education mentors that speak to students about their situations, connect to resources and follow up

Opportunity to have department personnel reach out to at-risk students

Address accessibility issues for Cowley/Sumner residents in transportation to/from campus, laptop/internet access prior to starting class (Offer bus service?) (Offer internet connection?)

Make students, especially adult students, more aware of support services available (possibly house in one area)

Ride share for students of all ages to come to class or between sites

Lack of diversity in student population and in student leaders

Opportunities exist for people to serve on teams (like DEI) and take on more leadership roles at the College

CLAW Initiative

Reworked to become more accessible to all employees

Empower students and staff

Incorporate student ideas into curriculum and programs to help strengthen classes and further success

Professional development - EMPACT - burnout - Trainers who know how to create instruction that holds students accountable for own learning

New programs

More community outreach/programs – ACES

Providing laptops/tablets to students - either on entrance to Cowley or as needed. Rental maybe - turn in at end of semester - rent via Bookstore

THREATS

People need to figure out how to pay for things and school

People making more to work right out of school without having an education

People not seeing a need for college

Unknown future due to COVID

Funding changes

Community perception

Board of Trustee conflicts

COVID

Funding

Basing decisions solely on financial situation

Community image

Lack of trust

Funding

Enrollment

Financials

Trust

Lack of fiscal planning on our buildings on upkeep in reference to the appearances being more important than people

Continuing to lack transparency

Bias/conflict of interest if it is not squashed; not reflective/aware

Exhaustion

Fear

Upperclassmen role models, i.e. juniors/Seniors

Bureaucracy - difficult to be able to change when outside forces/social pressures present themselves

Students not know what failure is (academic)

Other schools

Growing Derby

Decent paying jobs (line work) low unemployment rate

Technology changes

Social norms

Cultural influences

Lack of training as policies, procedures and tech changes

Protection of ??

Divisive opinions

Schools encroaching

Increased use of Internet and online classes increasing ability to deceive, cheat and plagiarize

Decline of family structure does not support potential and current students' pursuit of education; can lead to lack of integrity & discipline & work ethic

Online resources are replacing critical thinking and problem-solving skill development

Lack of industry

Money

Lack of college interest

Displacement of face to face

COVID fear

Move of associate's degrees to universities

Decline in enrollment

Students wish to complete the "easy" courses while here rather than following the full transfer pathway

How do we help those who fall into academic probation

Resources for academic quality and competitiveness

How do we educate students better on degree requirements, AA, AS, etc. to improve completion rates

Provide programs where special local needs to grow and improve local economy and advancement?

Filling teacher/staff positions

COVID

Student burnout

We focus on other schools to ignore out weakness

THREATS, *cont.*

We are myopic

Physical over-expansion

Digital under expansion

Public perception

Lack of communication to diverse populations

Confusing organizational flow for students and new employees

Feuding

Competition

No imagination from administration in using what we have, instead of building more

No real sense of competing on our part, because of our said lack of imagination

Ignoring changing student populations and their values

Students not embracing their own role in creating their success and not having a support network at home. This is a threat to retention

External higher ed leadership have more networking contacts and opportunities

Sometimes there seems to be a lack of value of education in general that we need to be better at advocating/being a leader in our community for

COVID-19

Personal development and lack of opportunity to train

Instructor burnout - How much can we do for them before we give up/get burned out?

Students who leave AC after graduation; not staying to benefit community! How can Cowley actively encourage them to stay here?

Cowley doesn't give back to the community as we used to - not integrated into community. Where's the meshing of them?

Sumner Campus - not enough enrollment, drain on resources, jeopardize relations

Strategy therefore is the extension of an organization's mission, forming a purpose-driven bridge between the organization and its environment. Strategies outline the organization's response to the fundamental challenges it faces. ***To follow the bridge metaphor, strategic issues show where bridges are needed and strategies are the bridge.***

Bryson, J. M. (2011). Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations*.*

A strategic issue:

- *Should broadly impact the entire organization;*
- *Require the collaborative effort of multiple departments/divisions;*
- *Might require changes to organizational design and/or the creation of new actions to meet the issue;*
- *May require resource investment such as time, technology, and budget-allocation; and*
- *Have high consequences to the organization if not addressed such as major long—term disruptions to services provided to stakeholders and/or large cost/revenue setbacks.*

As you work through the lists below, keep the following questions in mind:

- Will addressing this issue demonstrate our actions are aligned with our mission, vision and values?
- Is it within our ability to address this issue or will it require effort by other, outside groups? (Any issues which require significant input from groups outside the College are not strategic issues).
- Will it require the effort of multiple departments to address this issue? If not, this issue may be operational and not strategic.
- Will it take several years to address this issue? If it will only take one year to address this issue, it's probably operational and not strategic.
- **Will we face high consequences in terms of student success, stakeholder satisfaction and/or our ability to continue as a community college?** If the stakes are high, then it's a strategic issue.

Strategic Issues Related to Community	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How will we increase large industry locating to our area?	
How can we foster personal and professional growth in a community that's declining?	
How can we bring in more local students?	
How can we encourage more rental housing?	
How can we be accountable to the community to educate students if they have no transportation to campus or no computer/internet access at home?	
How do we increase the involvement of community leadership outside of the college?	
How can Cowley be a leader in advocating for better attitudes toward education in general in this community?	
How can we improve the numbers of Cowley County residents who have an associate's degree or higher if our population is declining?	
How do we improve community image and trust?	
How do we build/restore trust within the college and (between) the community and college?	
Struggling businesses/businesses shutting down/closing	
Offer "housing/rentals" for non-traditionally aged, adult students	
Breaking the "Because my dad's dad did this" mentality	
What can the college do in terms of more/better community outreach? What have we lost in the past 15-20 years that we used to do?	
I'm not certain we are being accountable to Cowley County taxpayers with money spent on campuses outside of Cowley County. I believe students are receiving a quality education at a reasonable price.	
I think we should lead the community to have a better attitude toward education in general. Anti-intellectualism is rampant, and associates degrees are undervalued so much so that the census doesn't even record those degrees in their college-educated numbers. Many people still look at CC at a Ju-co, even under-valuing trades, which are highly needed and are skills which should be more respected.	

Strategic Issues Related to Infrastructure	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How can we make better use of our facilities?	
How can we proactively make campuses physically accessible?	
How will we be able to meet the increased technology needs because of the pandemic?	

Strategic Issues Related to Student Success	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How do we inspire our students to be persistent and succeed?	
How do we nurture those who continue to fall into academic probation?	
How do we better educate students on degree types and completion requirements?	
How do we increase people and resources to increase student success in remedial education?	
How can we increase work study opportunities to increase student commitment and retention?	
How can we diversify student life for our satellite campuses?	
How can we be accountable to the community to educate students if there is such a huge gap between college readiness and college standards?	
How can we educate students in the community who may be at/near poverty level and limited mastery of the English language? (hire bilingual instructors?)	
How can we provide financial assistance or reduced burden to part-time, low-income students?	
How can we motivate students to take an active role in their success who have been hand-held through high school? How do we instill confidence to make them realize they can do it?	
How can leadership use data to better serve growing populations at Cowley?	
How can we meet both academic and athletic goals for student degree completion and career goals?	
How can we honestly and transparently help students complete & finance their degree "on time?"	
How can we better help students develop discipline and work ethic? (Teach them not to "short cut" or "cheat").	
Where do we draw the line between guaranteed success for students and allowing accountability for their success?	
How do we shift focus back to student success?	
How do we make student success our focus again?	
Is it ethically sound for us to push as much online learning when it may not be in the best interest of students? Creates more isolation – social skills – time management – mental illness on the rise. Makes us money but is it ethical?	

More highlighting and promoting of clubs and activities and their accomplishments (more promotion in general)	
Increase focus on non-traditional students including offering housing/rentals and daycare (possibly at reduced cost)	
We need to look at everything through a student focused lens. We need to provide more opportunities for recreation for students on campus.	
Trio programs have shown their value and success at Cowley. There are at least six other Trio grants that could be applied for. I suggest SSS Disability or SSS Stem in Health care. Their cost to the college is minimal and could add more resources for student success. I have suggested this twice before.	
Students are becoming more disconnected - we need to try and give them a sense of community, identity, and importance	

Strategic Issues Related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How can we improve communication to diverse populations to better serve them and non-traditional students?	
How can we cater our services to women's issues?	
How will we increase diversity among college leadership and student leadership?	
How can we as an institution come together and embrace differences?	
How can we make students accountable for their own learning when they are struggling with equity issues and/or accessibility, especially Wi-Fi and home computer access?	
How can we proactively make campuses physically accessible?	

Strategic Issues Related to Access to Education	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How can we appeal to more local minorities?	
How can we bring in more local students?	
Focus on nontraditional students	
Offering "housing/rentals"	
Daycare offer for students/staff price reduction	
Affordability	

Strategic Issues Related to Revenue Streams	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How can we locate more funding sources other than enrollment and taxes?	
How do we increase faculty/staff accountability?	
How do we maintain instead of increasing fees to help students with costs?	
How do we acquire the resources necessary to ensure all programs are equitable in quality and is competitive to outside programs?	
How do we provide a positive atmosphere for growth if we experience a 1.5 million dollar cut in our budget?	
Lack of funding	

Strategic Issues Related to Academic Programming	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
Could we create a 2+2 with Southwestern?	
How do we ensure we are providing programs which specifically address local needs to grow and improve local economic sustainability advance community educational growth?	
How do we increase people and resources to increase student success in remedial education?	
How can academics improve course processes to eliminate opportunities for academic dishonesty?	
How do we retain students and keep FTE as opportunities to cheat evolve with technology? Provide learning opportunities; staff and faculty work together to catch & stop academic violations; working through violations to ensure their behaviors do not continue into the transfer institution.	
Target more STEM	
Create more short term, 8-week, personal development courses and/or certificates that help students build resumes, develop trade skills	
A lack of accountability to current programs' revitalization and faculty upkeep/upgrade	
Replicating programs, rather than developing new, locations, needed programs (HVAC, electric, etc.)?	
Relationships with our 4-year institutions; need more partnerships to make it easier to transfer	
We need to look at the transfer report data to other institutions as well as strict adherence to the core outcome agreements	
I'll actually give an idea, instead of listing grievances: this school should focus on letting students create their own multiple paths and future. My last school, (name removed to preserve respondent anonymity), started combining their academic and trade school programs, so students would have multiple options coming out of that school. Students	

would have both an associates and a trade cert. Students could combine and synergize their trade cert and their associates in really unique ways. A few small examples: art majors could also take welding cert. courses; business majors could take manufacturing cert. courses; theater tech majors could take construction cert. courses; etc. This is a really unique opportunity for Cowley to differentiate itself in the area, while providing an incredible opportunity for the students. This could help diversify and enrich our trade programs, while providing students multiple options for their futures when they leave Cowley, plus the college gets to differentiate itself from other colleges in its marketing. Plus, with the Kansas Promise, this type of hybrid program would be perfect for the school to capitalize on those state programs/funds.

COVID-19	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
COVID and its effects	
Internships, etc. have decreased due to pandemic	
Has the pandemic changed how we have to do our "regular business?'	
How will the pandemic still affect us five years from now?	

Strategic Issues Related to Enrollment	Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?
How do we get to 5,000 by 2025?	
How do we get more Wichita Metro to Mulvane Campus?	
How can we increase awareness that Cowley College isn't just for recent HS graduates? (target non-traditional students and advertise Kansas Promise Scholarships)	
How do we increase the number of recently graduated local students if they were told they were not college material during high school?	
Declining population of high school students	
Creating opportunities and educating individuals about what a community college can offer them	
Mindset towards colleges and potential value and worth	
Offer daycare for students; price reduction if possible	
How can we meet the needs of adult learners if we continue to structure our schedule around the traditional 16-week schedule? Can we offer fast track versions of degrees so the learning is compacted into continuous 8-week sub-terms?	

How do we recruit more students with a shrinking rural population? Why would Wichita students want to come to Ark City?	

Strategic Issues Related to Organizational Strength	**Does this meet the criteria for a strategic issue?**
How can we make tough ethical decisions?	
How can we create a more positive local media presence?	
How can we increase public perception through community involvement, outreach, positive relationships and being inclusive towards disenfranchised campus sites?	
How do we increase faculty/staff accountability?	
How do we help employees with COVID burnout which will help overall morale?	
To care for others sic (students) we must first care for ourselves. Commit to meaningful employee experiences.	
How do we increase/encourage leadership opportunities that are outside of their normal job responsibilities & duties?	
How can we ensure employees are valued?	
How can faculty & staff focus on serving and investing in their students and community, if administrators are willing to invest in faculty & staff?	
How can we (faculty & staff) build relationships with high schools, guidance counselors, etc. for recruitment if we're being asked to fill many, many roles with no pay or very little institutional help?	
How can we grow training opportunities with limited staff and funding options?	
How can we keep our alumni plugged in and as part of our leadership?	
Can we have a professional development group that looks at P.D. opportunities and how to improve the use of knowledge gained at workshops, seminars, etc.?	
Do we have enough time to be innovative and visionary with having such a light staff?	
What does Cowley College consider to be an ethical leader?	
How can we be more transparent to our stakeholders?	
How can we improve communication or onboarding to provide more consistent messaging to students regarding work ethic, integrity, expectations?	
How do you reconcile the bureaucracy with the need to adapt quickly?	
How can employees become more aware of the rationalizations and biases that negatively impact decision making?	
How can we gain back community, employee and student trust?	
How can we as a whole be heard on things that need to be changed within the institution?	

How do we make faculty and staff feel more valued?	
How do we make staff and faculty feel more valued and supported?	
How do we improve communication among staff, faculty and administration?	
How do we improve trust among staff, faculty and administration?	
I am very aware that not everything is for public consumption, but I feel there is an atmosphere of secrecy that envelops the President's office that leads to feelings of mistrust. It's OK to admit if something isn't working.	
How do we maintain quality professional development with limited funds	
Make sure leadership and ethics values are incorporated into hiring process	
Leverage the students – ACES Programs, clubs and organizations, Ambassadors, etc.	
Offer daycare for staff (reduced price if possible)	
How do we brand ourselves as unique among so many community colleges and technical schools? What is our brand?	
Need for more people connecting workshops, i.e. teambuilding for employees among departments or cross-departmental/work areas, and for students.	
What can be done to attract qualified, great staff and faculty?	
How can we keep caring, qualified instructors when they are struggling with burn out issues?	
The college has done a good job recently with years of service recognition. Paying the years of service in a lump sum was a huge acknowledgement of the value that would have to employees.	
We need to give students an opportunity to participate in the goal setting process for their educational needs this focuses on good advising, listening, and guiding	

For more information about this report or about strategic planning at Cowley College, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness
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